Henry Seidel Canby Reviews Willa Cather's New Novel

The Saturday Review of Literature

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NIHILISM, LITERATURE, AND DEMOCRACY
An Article by Louis J. Halle, Jr.

"BRITAIN SPEAKS"
By J. B. Priestley
Reviewed by Henry B. Kranz

"YESTERDAY IS DEAD"
By Stuart Cloete
Reviewed by George Catlin

"AND NO MAN'S WIT"
By Rose Macaulay
Reviewed by George Dangerfield

"AMERICAN VAUDEVILLE"
By Douglas Gilbert
Reviewed by Melville Cane

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By Ruth M. Underhill
Reviewed by Oliver LaFarge

MOTHER NATURE'S APOSTLE
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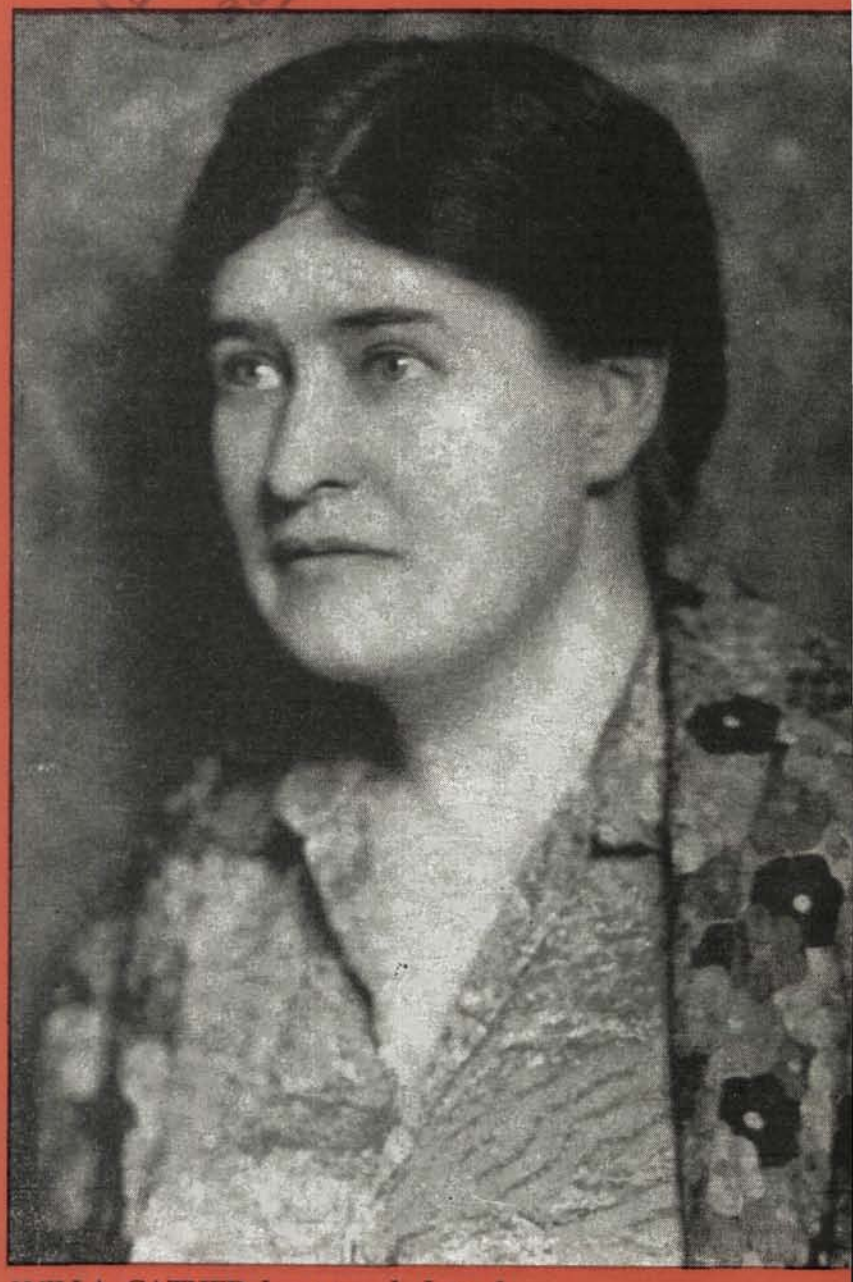

WILLA CATHER has triumphed in the French art of the *Nouvelle* . . . *(See page 5)*

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Nihilism, Literature, and Democracy

LOUIS J. HALLE, JR.

IT is commonly said, or tacitly supposed, that the primary function of literature in a democracy is simply to portray life as it is. No generalization made about literature has wider acceptance in our day, none is safer from attack. We take it for granted, to an amazing degree, that if the faithful documentation of actual life is not the only function of our serious creative literature it is, at least, the only important one. We expect that what a writer must do is to go out and look at some aspect of real life, experience it himself, see the people living in a city or working on a farm or associating in towns, share their burdens, understand their problems, and then write a faithful documentary report on it all. He must render life as it is, not as it might be. So we readers, who have not had the opportunity to experience just that particular aspect of life, come to know the truth of it from the account rendered to us. If the account takes the form of a novel, we judge that novel by how true it apparently is to the life, by the degree in which it gives us a feeling of actually living in the slums of St. Louis, or on the prairies of Iowa, or among the share-croppers of the South. We value this function of literature as a contribution to the education of the citizen in a democracy, an extension of his experience that makes him more competent to assume his share in the responsibility of government. Such a democratic literature, we say, must naturally follow life with uncompromising fidelity if it is to justify itself. We must not blame our writers if their productions are often sordid, unheroic, or vulgar, for life itself is often all these things. The enlightened citizen of a democracy will take no exception to truth. He will rather face brute actuality with all the strength of stomach he can muster, just as the surgeon at the operating-table will not close his eyes to the sight of a cancer.

Publishers' blurbs and reviewers' commentaries alike reveal how widespread is this acceptance of the documentary function of literature. It is long, for instance, since publishers commonly commended new novels to the public for their "moral elevation," their "lofty sentiment," or any "improving" qualities in the senses in which a generation now gone used the term. They are likely rather to commend new novels for being brutally true to this or that setting, this or that actuality. Literary critics, meanwhile, urge that novelists take this region or that as the setting for their novels instead of the other region, because the other region has already been thoroughly covered, while this and that region remain almost wholly undocumented; exactly as though a novel set in Liverpool must be intrinsically better than a novel set in the city of London, of which we already know every nook and cranny from the descriptions left us by generations of novelists and poets.

It would be foolish to deny that documentation is one function of literature. It is, doubtless, an indispensable function in a democracy. But there is another face to the medal. There is an even more vital function which literature performs in a democracy, and of this function we have, to our loss, heard comparatively little in recent years. For if literature follows life, so does life follow literature. The men and women who supply us with our poetry and fiction, who make life clear to us, are our pioneers, they point our way by exemplification, they hold the light. We follow. Emulation, almost alone, makes us what we are as citizens. What we know about life teaches us, by example, how to live. If all the characters, actual or fictional, with whom we had acquaintance were noble in the conduct of their lives, so should most of us be too. If all were cynical and corrupt, it is hardly possible that we should be saved from cynicism and corruption. We follow the examples we find in life, and we learn about life from literature, which supplies us in the most concentrated and effective form with the models for our emulation.

(From the forthcoming Random House edition of "Don Quixote," illustrated by Mueller).
Don Quixote

I am going to limit my point to the fewest and simplest possible illustrations. In some twenty years of personal experience, Joseph Conrad became familiar with many sides of life upon the sea. He knew men who represented the most abject side of that life, he participated in events that were sordid, he saw selfishness and greed, low cunning and slyness, cowardice and meanness. There is no doubt of this because the novels he later wrote fully exemplify these qualities. But what impressed Conrad most was the heroic quality of the life men led at sea—for that also existed. When he came to portray the life he knew it was this aspect of it that he singled out for special emphasis, this aspect which he considered it his function as a writer to represent. He did not lie to his readers, he did not invent what life itself could not supply, he did not fail to hold the mirror up to nature; but by his emphasis on the heroic he gave that life in particular and all life in general an aspect of heroism that it could not otherwise have had. He gave his readers an heroic model for their emulation, and I have myself known seaman steeped in the tales of Conrad to perform the most heroic and selfless feats at sea, to save other

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lives at the risk of their own, to encourage the downhearted in the face of disaster, to carry a forlorn hope to success. It was in some measure, I think, because they had been made conscious by literature of living an heroic existence that they conducted themselves heroically in real life. Here, specifically, life followed literature.

The extent to which Conrad felt himself justified, even obligated, in consciously placing his emphasis on the ideal aspects of real life, comes out clearly by referring a well-known passage from "Youth" to his own frank comment on that passage in a letter to Richard Curle. It is the passage in which the narrator Marlow (Conrad himself, for it is an autobiographical story) has his first youthfully idyllic glimpse of the East in a tropical seaport that remains unnamed. "The mysterious East faced me," he says, "perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave. . . . This was the East of the ancient navigators, so old, so mysterious, resplendent and sombre, living and unchanged, full of danger and promise." But when Curle, in an article on Conrad which he submitted for his comment in advance of publication, coupled that passage with the name of the actual seaport to which it alluded, Conrad objected in some alarm.

> The paragraph you quote of the East meeting the narrator is all right in itself [he wrote to Curle], whereas directly it's connected with . . . it becomes nothing at all . . . is a damned hole without any beach and without any glamour, and in relation to the parag. is not in tone. Therefore the par., when pinned to a particular spot, must appear diminished—a fake. And yet it is true!

That conscious obligation which Conrad felt in his capacity of a writer finds explicit statement in a passage by Herman Melville that appears in "Moby Dick." "Men," he writes,

> may seem detestable as joint stock-companies and nations; knaves, fools, and murderers there may be; men may have mean and meagre faces; but man, in the ideal, is so noble and so sparkling, such a grand and glowing creature, that over any ignominious blemish in him all his fellows should run to throw their costliest robes. That immaculate manliness we feel within ourselves . . . remains intact though all the outer character seem gone. . . .

I have chosen Conrad to illustrate this kind of affirmation in literature because there appeared, a year or two ago, a novel about the sea that was compared in some quarters to the novels of Conrad and that provides me with my perfect example of nihilism in literature, the character exactly opposite to that which Conrad gave his works. It was written by a man who had also experienced life upon the sea and who wrote, I am sure, every bit as true to the life as Conrad himself. But this writer, cynical and embittered, was chiefly impressed by the abjectness, the cowardice, the selfishness of human behavior. Because he was so embittered, he took a bitter sort of joy in portraying the unheroic, as a man distracted by toothache gets an angry satisfaction from biting down on the tooth that hurts him; or maybe it was *pour épater le bourgeois*. He wanted to show that men were no better than rats, that in the midst of disaster each would shift for himself without compunction and devil take the hindmost, that the heroism portrayed by centuries of literature was not true to the raw actuality; and this he proceeded to show with painfully effective artistry. But I would not give Hans Otto Storm's "Made in U. S. A." to any impressionable sea-captain about to embark on a dangerous voyage with passengers or mail for which he was personally responsible. I would not give it to an aviator of the R.A.F. I would not give it to a captain of industry, or a politician, or a labor-leader.

Conrad exhibited both sides of human character while emphasizing the heroic, that realization of man's highest aspiration, Storm debunked heroism. His work is no less opposite in its tendency to the creative function of literature than a Black Mass is to the rituals of religion.

Many of us have privately deplored the nihilistic tendency of modern literature for many years now. We are, perhaps, even more conscious of the evil and more outspoken about it today because our democratic ship has sounded shoal-water; a crisis is at hand in which our valor will be tested, and unless it is equal to the occasion the ship will surely be lost. We know that the cynicism with which we have been imbued by the nihilistic philosophy of our age (much of it presented in the guise of documentation, excusing itself as such) is no theoretical ill of academic concern but a practical and immediate evil. Confronted with mortal danger, we now find that this philosophy has sapped our capacity for fortitude, soured our hopes, corrupted our ideals, weakened our purpose, and tarnished the very face of virtue before our eyes. It is no small disservice that the nihilists have done our democracy.

But the outcry against this evil, against this erosion of men's spirits by the philosophy of nihilism, is no longer that of an occasional small voice in the wilderness. Walter Lippmann, for instance, through his widely syndicated newspaper column, has recently joined

(*Continued on page* 16)

THIS WEEK

Articles

PAGE

NIHILISM, LITERATURE, AND DEMOCRACY
By Louis J. Halle, Jr. 3

MOTHER NATURE'S APOSTLE
By J. Bryan, III 11

Reviews

SAPPHIRA AND THE SLAVE GIRL
By Willa Cather
Reviewed by Henry Seidel Canby 5

BRITAIN SPEAKS
By J. B. Priestley
Reviewed by Henry B. Kranz 6

AND NO MAN'S WIT
By Rose Macaulay
Reviewed by George Dangerfield 6

AMERICAN VAUDEVILLE
By Douglas Gilbert
Reviewed by Melville Cane 7

HAWK OVER WHIRLPOOLS
By Ruth M. Underhill
Reviewed by Oliver LaFarge 10

SECOND WIND
By Carl Zuckmayer
Reviewed by Heinz Norden 13

YESTERDAY IS DEAD
By Stuart Cloete
Reviewed by George Catlin 14

TO NOWHERE AND RETURN
By Joseph Hilton Smyth
Reviewed by Linton Wells 18

Departments

YOUR LITERARY I.Q. 5
EDITORIAL 8
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 9
AUTHOR, AUTHOR! 10
VIRGINIBUS PUERISQUE 17
THE NEW BOOKS 19
THE CRIMINAL RECORD 21
DOUBLE-CROSTICS: No. 351 23
TRADE WINDS 24

NEXT WEEK

THE SOVIET POWER
By Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury
Reviewed by William Henry Chamberlin

I CHOSE DENMARK
By Francis Hackett
Reviewed by Marius Hansome

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Conversation Piece

SAPPHIRA AND THE SLAVE GIRL. By Willa Cather. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1940. 295 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

IT is a pleasure for a reviewer who has long followed American fiction with interest to find in this novel that delicate yet powerful art of brief and significant narrative, where all that is needed is included, and all that is needless is left out. There is much to be said for a novel made long by the very profusion of life,—but very little in praise of the skill of the hundreds of contemporary novelists who take nine hundred pages to accomplish what Miss Cather, with great craftmanship, does in less than three hundred. It is the French art of the *nouvelle,* in which Voltaire triumphed, and the Russian Turgeniev excelled. Miss Cather has triumphed in it also.

For this new novel of hers belongs to a notable trio, of which "Shadows on the Rock," and "Death Comes for the Archbishop," are the two other members. In these three books particularly, she has with deceptive simplicity evoked the quality of a life, a faith, and a region—of Quebec and French Canada; of our Roman Catholic and Spanish Southwest; and now of the hill country of Virginia and a slave-owning society just before the Civil War.

"Sapphira and the Slave Girl" is one of those quiet narratives which build up characters and situations with such easy brush strokes that the reader is not aware of the intensity of the situations developing until they take over the story. The reason is that Miss Cather is not writing a melodrama of slavery and seduction, but recreating, with subtle selection of incident, a society and a culture and a sociology in which a conflict of morals and of philosophies produces an inner, ever more tightly-coiled spring.

Sapphira is an aristocrat from Winchester, not adjusted to the environment of the hills, but easily dominating it. Her husband is Henry Colbert, a miller, who comes from plain people, and who is Sapphira's inferior in taste for fine living, her superior in everything else but courage. Nancy, the slave girl, offspring of a wandering painter or Henry's brother—no one knows—is the coiling spring. Lovely and gentle herself, devoted to Colbert whom she tends with the affection he has never had from his wife, she is the cause of jealousy which Sapphira is too proud to acknowledge. She is

Wood engraving by George Soper. ("Fine Prints of the Year, 1935").

the cause of a vicarious crime, for Sapphira—with purpose clear or unclear—brings the seducer to the house, a seducer whose lack of scruple is itself a product of a social situation really as dangerous for the white as for the black.

Such a situation provides an opportunity for Miss Cather, with her well-known aptitude for subtle characterization, to recreate a Virginia of the last of the old days. Sapphira is eighteenth century; Martin, the seducer, is soft, early nineteenth; Henry Colbert and his faithful slave Sapphira belong to the future of utilitarian labor, and a bourgeois morality. Back of them all is old Jezebel, who had been born a cannibal, and is nearest to Sapphira's heart. Around them is history—the escape of Nancy to Canada, the oncoming Civil War, the wreck of a slave-owning society, the far-off survivors of which, seeming from another world, are seen by a little girl a whole generation after.

The tone of this book, while it keeps to the 50's and 60's, evokes a rich, deep picture, like a conversation piece by a great master. Therefore, one hesitates at the lack of unity resulting from the retrospection of the last pages. Perhaps Miss Cather's own memories has forced themselves into dramatization here. But whatever may be said of her ending, the book itself, as I said at the beginning of this review, accomplishes what lesser novelists fail to achieve with three times the length. In the gradual evoking of the American past, where this American generation of writers has been so successful, "Sapphira and the Slave Girl" adds something unattempted yet by any one with Miss Cather's mature authority of art.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

CHRISTMAS STORIES

The Christmas season has provided a theme for writers in all lands and ages. Briefly described below are six well-known short stories about Christmas. Do you remember them? Allow 5 points if you can recall the names of the characters and another 5 if you can remember the authors who created them. A score of 50 is par, 60 is good, 75 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 17.

1. She sold her beautiful long hair to buy her husband a watch chain for Christmas, only to find that he had sold his watch to buy her a set of combs.
2. This youthful salesgirl burned up all of her stock in trade before freezing to death on New Year's Eve.
3. "Afterwards . . . it was always said of him that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge."
4. Substituting for Santa Claus, he rode a vicious mare for 50 miles at breakneck speed, surviving a flooded creek and a bandit's bullet, to bring some presents for a little boy who was ill with rheumatic fever.
5. Unable to accompany his three fellow philosophers who were bearing gifts to the Christ child, he was delayed for 33 years and had given away his sapphire, ruby, and pearl before his quest was fulfilled.
6. After a happy Christmas day, this little invalid girl, after listening to the Christmas chimes, fell asleep and peacefully died.

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From Beleaguered England

BRITAIN SPEAKS. By J. B. Priestley. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1940. 263 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by HENRY B. KRANZ

NUMBERLESS people have written in from all over the United States, expressing their admiration and affection for J. B. Priestley as a result of his broadcasts from England to this country during the past few months. I have listened in on almost all of these fifteen minute talks. I was often deeply moved by what Priestley had to tell us of bomb-wracked London. I was often very much amused by the drily humorous tone of his conversations with his audience. But I must confess that up to now I had not known that these broadcasts were any more than cleverly concealed propaganda. Now that thirty-nine of these talks lie before me on the table in bookform I discover as I read them through that "Britain Speaks" is a masterpiece of modern war literature. I believe that this book, the best one that has come to us out of England concerning the war, will still hold its unique prestige a hundred years from now (or at least it should).

This primarily because it is the first book written during and about a war and yet not written in the first instance as a book but as entertainment over the air for millions of unknown listeners. Secondly, because it is the work of a creative artist who is able to transmit the gamut of human emotion in a few simple words. Finally, because Priestley (even better than Churchill or Bevin) represents that England of the common people which is determined today to fight on to eventual victory. "The issue is plain. We can't live with Nazism. Either we destroy it or it destroys us. And I don't believe it can destroy us."

J. B. Priestley in his Hampstead house.

If in a hundred years from now a man wants to read about what the people of London experienced, suffered, bore, and overcame during the terrible summer and autumn days of 1940; if he wants to know how and where they lived, how they laughed and died, how they loved and worked, how they stood for a great cause not exaltedly but because that's the way it is done in England—then he will find it all in Priestley.

His heart is in the right place and his tongue fears no censor. Thus he will say about a minister, "He does not belong to the ruling or official class—thank God."

His humor is inexhaustible. Let me give one example: "The Italians are saying, I read, that we're in a terrible panic, but all I can reply to that is that I've seen and heard more fuss and excitement just landing my luggage in Naples than I've seen and heard since the war started. Not that we don't see anything."

On one day, June fourteenth, he said of those Frenchmen who were fighting for their lives at the time:

> They must think, they must live, they must work and battle, only from day to day. And how these lines of verse come home today!
>
> O star! O ship of France, beat back and baffled long!
> Bear up, O smitten orb! A ship continue on!
> Again thy star, O France, fair lustrous star,
> In heavenly peace, clearer, more bright than ever,
> Shall beam immortal!
>
> Those lines which might have been composed for today, were actually written many many years ago, and by an American poet—Walt Whitman.

And so in this novel type of war-diary tragedy and comedy, poetry and factual reporting, propaganda and personal faith, round themselves into an expression of faith in democracy which will conquer because it must conquer. "Civilization can defend itself as fiercely as barbarism can attack and can continue to do it, can keep it up, with more patience, for patience, like truth-telling and kindness, are civilized virtues."

Cook's Tour of Chaos

AND NO MAN'S WIT. By Rose Macaulay. Boston: Little, Brown Co. 1940. 351 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

MISS ROSE MACAULAY and Mr. Ernest Hemingway have this in common; both their novels are concerned with the Civil War in Spain, and both derive their titles from John Donne. No doubt there is much truth in the epitaph which declared that Donne ruled as he thought fit the universal monarchy of wit: for the passages from which these titles are derived express a diametrically opposite point of view. Mr. Hemingway's quotation maintains, with a characteristically charnel-house beauty, a belief in the coherence of the world; Miss Macaulay's, with a characteristic astringency, refers to its incoherence.

Having united for a moment to display the virtuosity of Donne, these two novels thereafter fly apart. Mr. Hemingway's, being a great novel, or very near it, leaves the reader a little different from what he was when he began to read. He has had an experience, and he knows it. From Miss Macaulay, on the other hand, the reader gains a certain amount of information, but one wonders whether he gains any experience at all.

"And No Man's Wit" tells how an Englishwoman of liberal views, called Dr. Marlowe, goes to Spain to look for her son Guy, who has fought on the Loyalist side, and disappeared: possibly into death, possibly into a Francist concentration camp. She takes with her Guy's fiancee, Ellen Green; her second son, who is a Stalinist; her daughter, who is nothing much of anything, but nice; and Ernie the chauffeur, who also fought for the Loyalists, but is not certain why. In order to assist them in their search, they enlist the help of Guy's Oxford friend, a Spanish marquis, whose political opinions are somewhat to the right of Right. Since Guy is alive, but does not wish to be found, their search is fruitless, but their disputes on political topics seem to occupy most of their time anyway.

And so they wander across Franco's Spain, the tragic country where the present world upheaval began. It is rather like a Cook's tour of chaos. The guide—Miss Macaulay—is informed

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Rose Macaulay has something in common with Ernest Hemingway.

and amusing; the agreeable disagreements of the tourists take one's mind off the scenery. The only question is—is it worth the price?

A reader living one hundred years from now, and acquainted with Rose Macaulay's work, might easily say that this novel is, in some respects, though not in all, the wittiest of her books. No doubt it is priggish to remark, as a contemporary reader, that the wit is misplaced; that one cannot, yet, really get up a good giggle over Franco's Spain. The author herself believes that the cause of Democracy is the more just cause; but the point of her novel seems to be that human beings are absurd and outrageous and that it is doubtful whether anything much can be done for them.

It is quite possible—it is even probable—that here one misjudges Miss Macaulay. She may be trying to tell us that when things are too serious, it is no longer possible to be openly serious about them: she may be indicating her deepest feelings with a fleer. She injects into the novel a note of irrelevant fantasy—Ellen, the fiancee, has mermaid's blood in her, and disappears into the sea. This preposterous conceit might be her way of informing us that the whole novel must be taken *cum grano.*

Fantasy can be serious; but can it be apologetic? Perhaps it can. Perhaps, too, it is trite and ungenerous for a reviewer to say that a novel is witty but that he wishes the author hadn't written it. No matter. "And No Man's Wit" is a witty novel, but I wish Miss Macaulay hadn't written it.

George Dangerfield, a frequent reviewer in The Saturday Review, *is the author of "The Strange Death of Liberal England." He is at present working on a book on the Edwardian Period.*

Them Were the Days

AMERICAN VAUDEVILLE: It's Life and Times. By Douglas Gilbert. New York: Whittlesey House. 1940. 428 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by MELVILLE CANE

UNLESS you are immune against nostalgia you had better keep a safe distance from this book. Otherwise you'll be sure to catch it and catch it bad. Especially if your higher education, musical and dramatic, dates back to Tony Pastor and Harry Miner.

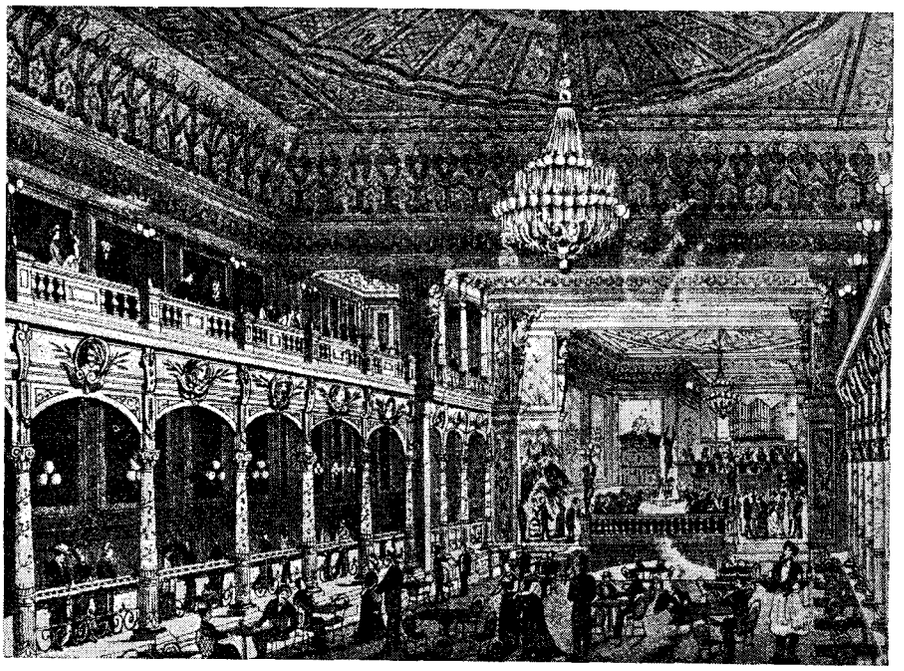
Do you remember when Max Rogers reported to Gus, in a dialect oozing with sauerkraut and mustard: "Every time I take a ferry-boat, it makes me cross"? (You laughed at that one, heartily and unashamed.) And the first time Harry Lauder frisked his kilts, swaggered with his twisted blackthorn, and warmed your heart with "I Love a Lassie"? Do you remember Albert Chevalier and his poignant pantomime to the words and air of "My Old Dutch"? And the Casino roof, and the New York roof, and the Victoria roof? When the world was equable and the tempo of living was measured by the clop-clop of the hansom cabhorse? When the melting pot was still simmering and it seemed funny just to talk "Dutch" or Irish or Yiddish? When all tramp comedians wore shoebrush beards and dropped lighted cigars into their tattered pants? When Cole and Johnson sang their coon (not croon) songs? And when art alluringly fronted the footlights framed in "living pictures" of the great masterpieces—until Anthony Comstock raided the show?

By this time, if you're the right sort of American and not a Fifth Columnist, you should be weeping in your beer. For, verily, them were the days! —when the genteel tradition included hoochy-koochy and rag-time, and singing waiters, and the burnt-cork interlocutor shouted: "Gentlemen! Be Seated!" and a ring of banjos started atwanging.

Mr. Gilbert, however, has accomplished far more than revive memories for the aging. His book is valuable documentation and entertainment for all those interested in a phase of American life and amusement now past but not to be forgotten. An important phase, for it was on the vaudeville stage that many of our celebrated actors, dancers, and singers served their apprenticeship to more important careers.

Mr. Gilbert traces the history of "variety" from the frontier period down to the fall of the final curtain at the Palace. He sets forth admirably the various influences; the Puritanical era of Keith and Proctor and Albee; the healthy invasion of foreign stars (Yvette Guilbert, Anna Held, Vesta Victoria, Lottie Collins); the feuds, the rivalries, the development of the vaudeville chains into big business; the gradual, inexorable alteration of the mores due to the ascendancy of the motion picture and the radio.

Whatever the book may lack in organization it gains in spontaneity and buoyancy.



Interior of Koster and Bial's Concert Hall

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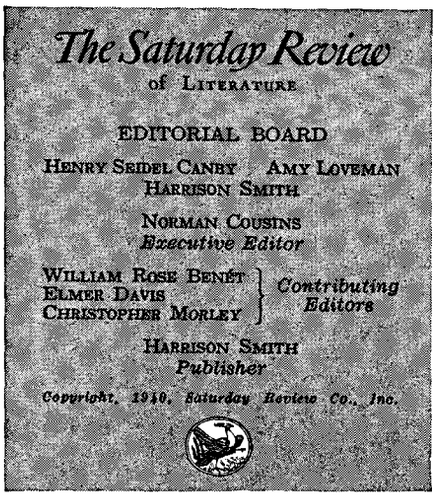

AID FOR BRITAIN

LET'S get it right. The slogans are probably all true. The British navy is our first line of defense. If England falls, our danger is doubled. Aid short of war should be increased to the limit. To the limit, because the limit will be needed. Short of war, because in this strange state of world belligerency which has been going on at least since 1933, actual warfare is unnecessary in order to accomplish important objectives, is unwise for us, unless we wish to tie our Atlantic hand in order to set free our might in the Pacific; may be a fatal blow to any hope of world settlement in our time.

There are short-term reasons for aiding Britain, which need not be argued here since the country echoes with them. There are long-term reasons, not so obvious, not so important now, since without short-term help there may be no long-term to argue about. But these more deep-reaching reasons have a great importance of their own.

No one who stops to think for a moment believes that defense, no matter how perfect, armament, no matter how strong, air, naval, or military victories, no matter how brilliant, are in themselves going to bring about a hopeful peace. "If you want war, prepare for it" is still true. Well, we have to prepare for war now whether we want it or not. Few will deny that. But there is no magic in "preparedness." It may save our skins and our homes, which is its ample justification now. But it cannot in itself make a world tolerable for civilization, unless nations permanently in arms (and permanently in economic distress and danger of revolution) can stay civilized, which seems more than doubtful.

Only the will to construct instead of destroy, only the will to respect human nature instead of enslaving it, only the will to make a better peace than we have had in the past, instead of a worse war, can in the long run provide world order instead of world anarchy. But such a will cannot be made effective except by like-minded people. It must have a broad base to grow on. It must be able to protect itself while growing. It must be able to make more converts than enemies. It must have courage, and it must have success.

The United States and Great Britain both have bad histories of ruthless aggression. Great Britain grew rich on colonial exploitation; we grew rich on selfish commercialism. But both countries have passed their greedy adolescence. There is the will there and here (and the power) to distribute well-being and to continue the risk of self-government. For it is always a risk, the alternative to which is efficient tyranny. There is the will also to make good neighbors (a good phrase even if overworked) instead of vassal states and slave dependencies. It is to be hoped that as Britain's war aims clarify this will become true even in the difficult question of India; and that our economic isolationists will risk some immediate profits in order to help build up a profitable world.

The British and the Americans are sufficiently like-minded in this. And they are like-minded in another relation which has very little to do with the thin blood-stream that flows between them. They speak the same language. Not the English tongue alone, though psychologists know how that makes both for easy quarrels and long range agreements. What is meant rather, is that they have like habits of thought, practices in business, ways of conducting a meeting, objectives in politics, ideals in home life, prejudices, ethics in every day affairs, generosities and selfishness, most important, perhaps, the same kind of heroes. Not just alike, of course, but with far more like-mindedness than exists between any other two great nations, as everyone who has lived and worked much abroad very well knows.

This relative like-mindedness resulted of course, partly from the fact of settlement here, when in the formative centuries the English way of life dominated, even in communities as mixed in blood as our industrial cities today. But now a much more important fact is responsible. Our educational system is based upon a literature and a philosophy which is an English tradition also. Our ideals, our social customs, our ways of life are subtly and inseparably related to this tradition, our religious attitudes in a less, but still in a very great measure, are deeply influenced by it. So true is all this that the cultural independence of America, which is of recent date, is not so much a divergence, though it does diverge, as a parallel development of a common tradition in which our roots are firmly planted. And the successful Americanizing of our foreign strains means only a conversion to this like-mindedness.

Nothing that happens to England, not even defeat, not even a war with the United States, would be likely to change this fact. In aiding Britain we are insuring the survival of the nation that inevitably, in whatever results from this world crisis, will come nearest to thinking, and feeling, and speaking as we do. If we believe in ourselves and our own way of life and want to see it go on and grow stronger and better, then our best bet in a dangerous race is to back England.

H. S. C.

Not by Waving Banners

By Phyllis McGinley

English lady will exchange recipe of a really good steak and kidney pudding for excellent recipe of lemon meringue pie or fish chowder.
Personal in the Saturday Review of Literature.

OH, not by waving banners,
By laying cornerstones
Or saying things at dinners
In loud, official tones,

I tell you not by fever
Of bunting or parade
Shall British hands forever
In Yankee hands be laid.

Divided by an ocean
No bigger than a brook,
Nation has stared at nation
With supercillious look

And thorny as a thicket
Nourish their separate pride,
While one held out for Cricket
And one for Baseball cried.

Greater and ever greater
Has grown the mortal rift
Since one said "Elevator"
And one kept muttering "Lift."

They've mocked each other's vesture,
Speech, custom, climate, use;
Till with a simple gesture
A lady brought the Truce.

For now to walk like Damon
With Pythias they begin.
One touch of grated lemon
Shall make these rivals kin

Sing, sing her praises louder
While knife and fork we ply—
United by a chowder
Exchanged for kidney pie.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wholesale Contracts

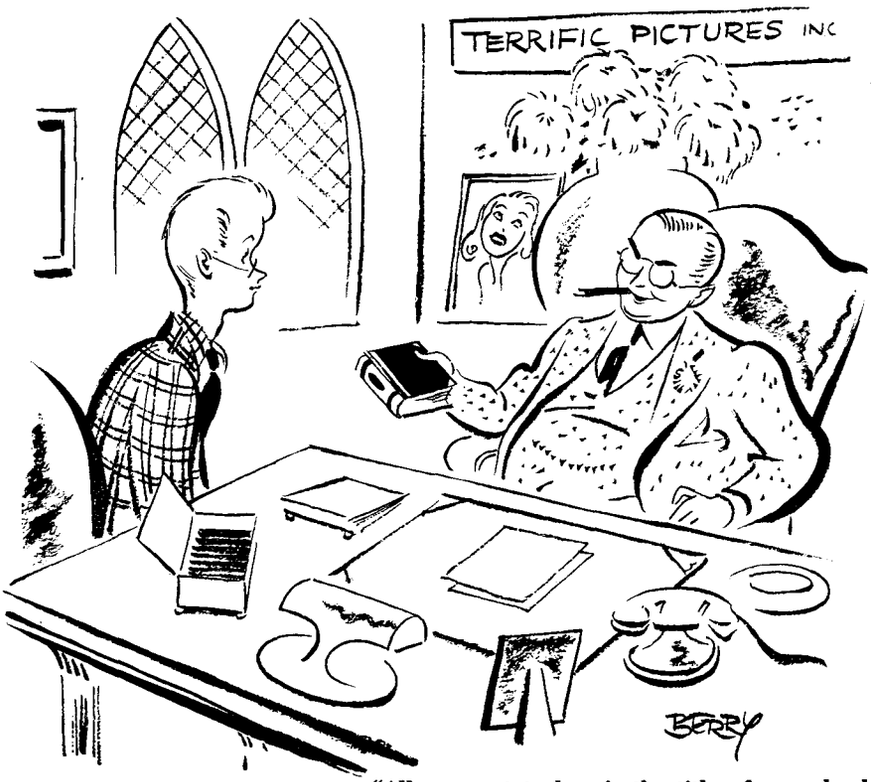
SIR:—Burton Rascoe's irresponsible and ill-informed libel might better have been left unanswered by the publishers. It will mislead no author who has had any personal contact with his publishers, nor anybody else who uses a little horse sense. With so many rival publishers ready to pounce — as Mr. Rascoe declares — the practices he describes would hardly pay.

Unhappily Raymond T. Bond's reply [*SRL,* November 30], in one particular, adds confusion to Mr. Rascoe's calumny. He himself misunderstands one of the questions to which he devotes much space—the wholesale contract. It is not an obsolescent practice requiring an apology. On the contrary, it is a newer method of accounting which many authors and publishers consider fairer than the old one. It was recommended in a report of the Editorial Committee of the National Association of Book Publishers in 1932, signed by members representing Little, Brown, Bobbs-Merrill, The Viking Press, Century, Knopf, and Harpers. Some years later a survey indicated a widespread and growing acceptance of it. No current survey is available, but we know that such respectable houses as Little, Brown, Harcourt, Harpers, Knopf, Macmillan, and Scribners now make at least some substantial use of it. In our own case (Viking) we recommend it as a fairer and more logical system, and we explain its operation to any author who is interested; but we never insist on it and are always ready to go back to the old method if the author prefers. Except for authors living abroad, to whom it would be difficult to explain, I do not think we have made a single contract on the old basis in the past five years. I am at liberty to say that contracts with such well-established authors as the following are made on the wholesale basis: John Steinbeck, Carl Van Doren, Upton Sinclair, Alexander Woollcott; and that it has proved acceptable to every one of the major literary agents, including Curtis Brown, Brandt and Brandt, Ann Watkins, George Bye, Leland Hayward, McIntosh and Otis, and Paul R. Reynolds. It has also been accepted in principle by the Author's League.

The logic of the wholesale contract is clear when its operation is understood, but it's not easy to state, and it's dull to read. It is not an attempt to pay the author less. The royalty rate must be adjusted so as to work out as well for the author as the corresponding rate on the old basis. It provides flexibility in sales by letting the author share directly in the income which the publisher receives from his book, instead of giving him an arbitrary price-per-copy, regardless of the discount which the publisher must give his customer. If discounts are increased for the sake of greater sales, it seems proper that the author should share in the decreased income per copy, as he does in the benefit of having more copies sold. Conversely, if sales can be made at less-than-average discount, the author should benefit as well as the publisher. To a much greater extent than before, the author becomes a partner with the publisher in the whole operation.

This, in fact, is the point which Mr. Rascoe refuses to see and which Mr. Bond in other respects rightly emphasized: publishing is a partnership between author and publisher, and in general we believe it is carried out today on a high level of open understanding and trust. The publisher risks his capital and technical resources, the author risks his talent and his effort, and the success or failure of either is the success or failure of the other.

MARSHALL BEST.
The Viking Press, Inc.



"All we want to buy is the title of your book, and I hope you don't mind if we change it."

Recognition of Women

SIR:—Mr. Ben Ray Redman states in a review of Costals and the Hippogriff [*SRL,* October 12]: "There was a time when the Church refused to admit that women had souls."

The statement is untrue, and probably started with the German socialist, Bebel, in his "Woman." It crops up occasionally, and has always been shown to be false. Your headliner gives the libel prominence.

It is related by Gregory of Tours that in a Church Council a regulation was discussed which was to bind man. *Homo* was the word used. One of the bishops insisted that the regulation should say man and woman. He was told that from Genesis to the Lord, Who was the Son of Man, *homo* was of epicene or common gender. That lesson in grammar has been perverted into the misstatement which Mr. Redman glibly repeats.

FRANCIS P. DONNELLY, S. J.
Fordham University,
New York, N. Y.

Senator-at-Large

SIR:—Two major parties with two opposing ideals of government have fought it out. Let the majority run the government as best it can according to its ideals; the people have chosen them. Let the defeated candidate, whoever he may be, rest and recuperate gracefully from the long strain of naughty name-calling.

If the defeated Republican candidate should be Senator-at-Large, then why not the Socialist candidate be Congressman-at-Large, the Communist candidate Sheriff-at-Large, the Prohibition candidate Prohibition-Officer-at-Large, and then the awful fear dawns on us that the Nazi party might be encouraged into running a candidate so he could be Investigator-at-Large.

RUTH TOWNSEND MARTIN.
Lenoir, N. C.

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Return of the Native

HAWK OVER WHIRLPOOLS. By Ruth M. Underhill. New York: J. J. Augustin. 1940. 255 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by OLIVER LAFARGE

THE danger in writing novels about Indians is that the material is rich and exotic, and that those of us who have lived among them have been captured by the remnants of beauty in their lives. The writer wants to convey that beauty and in his regret at its disintegration he becomes fascinated with his material, and he is likely in the end to produce something of value chiefly for its descriptive quality—which makes an inert novel—inadequately animated by a story about people who seem too unreal and remote to engage a reader deeply. But there is one theme which has validity for us, which actually does enter the composite that we know and recognize as our America. That is, how and to what degree the Indian is becoming a dynamic member of our own society, and what this chance is doing, good and bad, for the Indians and us.

Honest writing around this theme is bound to have some guts; a novel like Dr. Underhill's, built entirely around it, written with deep understanding and a fine sense of beauty, acquires weight. It becomes in part a commentary upon ourselves, it has something to tell us that we want to know.

The story of the Papago, "Hawk over Whirlpools," is not just one more lamenting account of how the white man's disastrous ways were thrust upon a group of Indians. It is a very acute study of white men dealing with Indians, of Indians *au naturel,* and Indians in the slums of an industrial town. To an extent achieved by no other book that I have read, it makes clear to us just what is the intangible and all-important essence of Indian life, not dependent upon odd clothes, long hair, or source of livelihood, which must be left undestroyed if Indians are to be of any use at all either to themselves or to us.

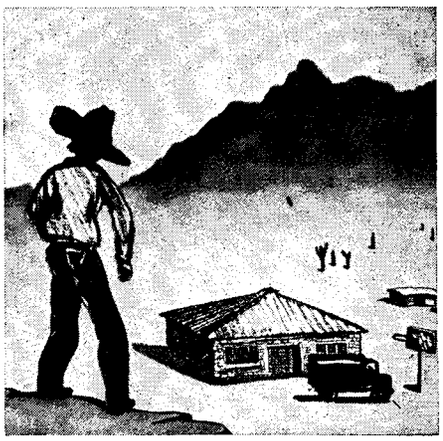
This is intensively the story of an individual, of Hawk over Whirlpools also known as Ralph Norcross, who was working in a canning factory and getting drunk Saturday nights when he should have been learning the ritual so that he could become Keeper of the Smoke, who returned to his people to become the leader of hostility against the white man, and who finally discovered the middle way by which Indians could make their first steps into American society without destroying themselves.

It is also the story of the struggle to save that intangible essence I have mentioned, the battle for the integrity of a people. There is no false sentimentalizing over ancient ways. These people are real. The women are delighted to give up the labor of making fragile pottery when instead they can get good ironware and china. The men prefer a well-paid, steady job to the endless toil of wringing food from the desert. But they stay Indian.

In her previous popular writing Dr. Underhill showed that she had caught the Indians' perception of beauty and commanded the prose in which to convey it. This is no less true here, and her style can make ugliness vivid as well. She does perhaps linger a little too long at times over her descriptions, just as at moments her story is overloaded with informative details of Papago custom. They are very interesting customs, sometimes they are beautiful, but when the information does not press the story forward, interest disappears and beauty fades.

This occurs only occasionally. Actually, for a story covering a man's life from his birth to past his twentieth year, this narrative moves swiftly. There is a fine economy in the story of Hawk over Whirlpool's years at school, a swift, neat, vivid job that could be done only by a real craftsman. The ending is dramatic, almost painfully exciting, and very slightly taxes one's credulity. There is something just a little too pat in the Hero's determination to use every force of evil he can muster to achieve an end which evil must in itself frustrate. But it is so exciting that the reader goes along with it all right, and the relief at the way things finally work out is a real pleasure.

This, then, sums up to a good novel and a fundamentally true one. The publisher, J. J. Augustin, has a reputation for making handsome books and has not stinted this one — for which reason it is a pity that the proofreading should be so bad.



From the jacket design for "Hawk Over Whirlpools."

Author, Author!

Brevities: *Cornelia Spencer* has concealed for a long time the fact that she is the younger sister of *Pearl Buck.* She wanted to make her literary way without capitalizing on the fame of the Nobel Prize winner. Besides turning out manuscript, Miss Spencer's principal occupation, however, is that of mother and housewife. She lives with her husband and three children near Washington, D. C. . . . *Vera Brittain* has dispatched the manuscript of her new book, "England's Hour," by Atlantic Clipper. . . . *Erle Stanley Gardner* ("The Case of the Silent Partner") recently complained to a friend about the richness of New Orleans cooking and the frequency of meals. "Then you don't like New Orleans?" "Like it?" the creator of the Perry Mason mysteries replied, "I love it! It's Gout's own country." . . . *Henry Miller,* last of the famous expatriate novelists, most of whose books have been issued abroad because they were considered too frank for publication in America, is on a trek about the United States, gathering material for a non-fiction work commissioned by a major American publisher. . . . . . *Ernest Hemingway* has been rebuked in an open letter from the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade because "For Whom the Bell Tolls" presents, the Veterans state, a picture of the Spanish Republican cause "so drastically mutilated and distorted . . . as to slander the cause for which we fought, and which you yourself honorably sustained both by your writing and by your personal action." . . . *Ellen Glasgow's* new novel will be called "In This Our Life."

★ ★

At Christmas time several years ago *William Saroyan,* remembering his own difficulties and poverty, sent to the editors of *Story* a sum of money to be given anonymously to writers having a tough time. It was divided up among five struggling authors. Four of them were very grateful, but the fifth wrote, "In view of the fact that you have published the work of that stinker, William Saroyan, and not my own, I shall accept this as conscience money from you."

★ ★

Edna Lee Booker ("News Is My Job") is on the way to San Francisco from Shanghai. She writes: "Patty, my daughter, and I are being evacuated via the South Seas. We are picking up 361 women and babies here at Manila and other Americans en route. There will be three shifts in the dining room and 1,000 cots! Noel Coward is on the boat and is very delightful." Miss Booker will lecture.

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A SATURDAY REVIEW PORTRAIT

Mother Nature's Apostle

J. BRYAN, III

THE author's name was unknown —Thornton Waldo Burgess. His title—"Old Mother West Wind" —didn't have much "pull." So the idea, a children's book of short stories presenting accurate information about animals, was doubly risky. Still, the book sold well enough for the publishers to ask him for a second one.

"Sorry," said Burgess. "I haven't got another animal story in me."

That was in 1910. But a few weeks ago a score of newspapers printed Burgess's 9,000th animal story. His fifty-seventh book, Aunt Sally's Woodhouse Night Club, will appear shortly. The ones already published, mostly collections of the syndicated stories, have sold more than 5,000,000 copies. They have made Peter Rabbit, Unc' Billy Possum, Buster Bear, Grandfather Frog, and some 120 other Burgess characters as familiar as household pets. They have been a powerful factor in the conversation of America's wild life, and they have taught children more nature lore than all the schools, museums, and zoos combined. In presenting him with the medal of the Permanent Wild Life Protection Fund, Dr. William T. Hornaday, Director of the New York Zoölogical Society, said, "Any man who can find his way into the hearts of a million children is a genius. If he carries a message of truth, he is a benefactor. Thornton W. Burgess is both."

From his tousled hair and weather-beaten face to his moccasins and dust-draggled trousers, Burgess looks the part of a naturalist. He is sixty-six, but is far too active to fit the pattern of his years. He fits much better the pattern that his young adorers have cut for him. Someone has said, "If the children of America could elect the President, it would be Burgess." They have already elected him their uncle-at-large. "Dear Mister Biges," wrote Betty Morrow, age five, "I lice yoo storys very much." "Of course Shakespear, Pilgrims Progress are better," wrote Elmer Peck, "but I think you have the finest animal books ever there were." They write to him intimately and affectionately, asking advice about their pets, reporting their experiences in the woods and fields, bringing him their troubles.

Letters come to him addressed simply "Farmer Brown's Boy, Green Meadows" (this is one of his few human characters); or "Thornton W. Burgess, Peter Rabbit's Godfather, U. S. A."

Almost every mail brings him stories like this one from a grateful mother: Her young son had refused to sleep with his window open. One night she read him about Jerry Muskrat, who always left air-holes in the roof of his house. Thereafter the child refused to have his window closed. Or this: a little girl was afraid of the dark until she read how Timmy the Flying Squirrel and Whitefoot the Woodmouse, two of the shyest animals, came out at night because there was less to be afraid of then.

Burgess's explanation is: "Every child feels that he is superior to the smaller members of the animal world, so he will not admit that one of these little creatures knows more than he does."

Bachrach

Thornton W. Burgess

It takes a man of Burgess's kindliness and genuine love of children and animals not to collapse under the burdens imposed by his reputation. When his telephone rings, he knows that half the time the caller will be an utter stranger, asking what to feed a young porcupine or how big to make a wren's house. There's hardly a week when some foundling bird or animal is not left on his doorstep.

He has sat up a whole night with a neighbor's boy, trying to thaw a frozen robin. A tremulous minister called him long distance one midnight for advice on how to release a skunk caught in a cellar rat-trap.

Burgess told him, "Jimmy Skunk's a gentleman. Speak to him softly, move slowly, pick him up by the tail, and pry the trap open. Jimmy'll know you're trying to help him. He won't bother you." Jimmy didn't.

Burgess always refers to animals by the names he has given them—Jimmy Skunk, Bobby Coon, Danny Meadow Mouse, Sammy Jay, and so on. He ranks skunks highest of all—perhaps "rates" would be a more tactful word—for preparedness, independence, and usefulness. His favorite photograph of Mrs. Burgess shows her with a skunk on her lap. He is fond of saying, "Jimmy Skunk is exactly what this nation ought to be—always ready, but armed for defense, not offense."

A recent story about Jimmy Skunk was pure propaganda for national preparedness, as many readers pointed out to the newspapers that printed it. For the most part, however, Burgess propagandizes for such personal virtues as kindness, generosity, and courage. "In the old-time story," he says, "the moral was pointed at the reader. In these animal stories, the moral is pointed at the characters. That's why children don't resent them."

Burgess knows what he's talking about, too. He is an expert on zoology. He knows the color of a heron's eyes, and that certain deer will eat trout. Each of his stories is based on some fact in the habits, character, or appearance of an animal. For his early stories, he drew entirely upon his own observation, but latterly much of his material has come from research and correspondence. Everything is translated into language that children can understand and remember.

"When I say I have a friend," Burgess explains, "the homeliest fellow that I know, and his tongue is put in backwards, and when he wants a drink he absorbs it through his skin, and he sings with his mouth closed, and he is covered with warts—I catch the children's attention right away. They know I'm talking about a toad, and after that they watch toads with new interest instead of killing them."

Instead of writing "A rabbit has a white tail," he puts it more vividly: "Peter Rabbit has a white patch on the seat of his britches." This trick of personalizing animals endears them to children. Farm boys have given up trapping after reading his stories about Jerry Muskrat and Billy Mink. Once a man approached Burgess after one of his lectures and said he had a bone to pick. He loved to hunt. A few weeks before, he had come home from a day in the field and was taking a rabbit from his coat pocket when his five-year-old daughter burst into tears.

"Why, daddy!" she sobbed. "You've killed Peter Rabbit!"

"That ended my hunting," the father told Burgess. "I don't want her

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Illustrations on this page from "Old Mother West Wind," by Thornton Burgess.

ever to look at me that way again."

Burgess himself would as soon shoot a baby as shoot a rabbit, but he is by no means a zealot. His conservation campaigns are not directed against legitimate hunting, but against hoggishness and waste. During the last war he urged the young members of his Green Meadows Club to do their bit by getting land-owners to pledge acreage as bird sanctuaries—"The birds destroy the insects that eat the food we need. Help the birds!" Before the war was over, children in the United States and Canada had helped establish 10,000 sanctuaries—or rather farms on which all hunting was forbidden—totaling 6,000,000 acres.

Burgess's tremendous influence on children was proved once and for all when the *Kansas City Star,* a subscriber to his syndicate, organized the Bedtime Story Club. In return for a certificate and button, children promised to "be kind to birds and animals and protect them from their enemies." It goes without saying that incidentally they were encouraged to buy the *Star.* The Club's life-span was a short three weeks, not even that of the purple-eyed fruit fly (*Drosophila melanogaster*). So many thousands of children applied for membership that the cost of enrolling them soared clean out of the *Star's* budget. It dropped the Club in a panic and never mentioned it again.

THERE was little in his childhood to justify a prediction that a marker would one day identify the house where he was born, in 1874, at Sandwich, on Cape Cod. He was a baby when his father died, and his mother was a semi-invalid. As soon as he was able to work, he did. Money was scarce. Amusements were few. Whatever time the boy could borrow from his chores, he spent in the fields or on the beach. The book of nature was hard to read at first, but at least it was free. Soon he learned to love it, although the love was mixed with envy. Years later, remembering the buoyant gulls and the carefree rabbits he said, "I often wished in those days that I was one of them."

He could not afford to go to college, so he got a job as cashier in a Boston shoe store. This "nightmare," as he describes it, lasted two years. The happiest moment of his youth was when his employer told him that business did not warrant keeping him on. Burgess doesn't think he could have stuck it as long as he did, if it hadn't been for his hobby and—when the job dissolved—his discovery that he could make it pay.

Fortunately he had a hobby—writing light verse. And one day he learned, to his astonishment, that men actually received money for composing advertisements. So nineteen-year-old Burgess inserted this in an advertising journal called Brains:

> What's this you're telling—
> Goods not selling?
> Try a verse of mine!
>
> Always catching,
> Always fetching.
> Trade in any line!
>
> Clever ads written in verse for ANY and ALL lines of trade. Correspondence solicited. T. W. Burgess. P.O. Box 2069.

To his further astonishment a Boston agency hired him to parody Longfellow's "The Courtship of Miles Standish," working in plugs for Miles Standish Spring Water. Moreover, the printer who set up the copy tipped him off to another customer—Austin's Dog Biscuit. "The Origin of Shredded Wheat" brought him a few dollars more.

Burgess did two short tricks as a calendar salesman and as a bookkeeper, but his heart wasn't in them. He had drunk the headiest brew in the world—printer's ink. After a term as newspaper officeboy, he became a reporter on the weekly *Springfield Homestead,* writing sports, special articles, a poem, and two columns of fraternal news. The fraternal news explains why Burgess has never joined an organization of any sort.

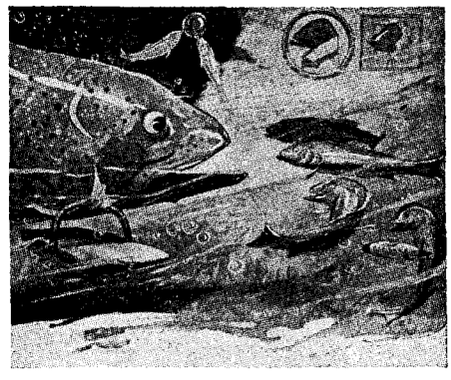
Versatile and productive, Burgess branched out. *Collier's* and other magazines began to print his overflow of copy. For nearly a year, he had seven full pages in each issue of *Country Life* under four different names. He began supplying verses for topical songs to the vaudeville singers who played the Gilmore Theater in Springfield. He teamed up with a composer, and presently a song called "Eva" was heard on every barrel-organ in the country. He could furnish on demand any literary product from a limerick to a full-dress obit. He even, soon after his marriage in 1905, turned out "The Bride's Primer," a collection of little housekeeping problems.

All this time, he spent every spare hour—it is hard to understand how there were any—rambling in the woods. His vacations were camping trips. And he bought all the books on natural history that he could afford. However, he might never have found his true calling, but for two misfortunes. In 1906 his wife died, leaving him an infant son. And *Good Housekeeping,* of which he was then managing editor, was sold over his head, leaving him without a job.

EACH night at bedtime, he used to tell the boy a story about his friends in the woods and fields. The child enjoyed them so much that when he was sent to Chicago for a month's visit, he made his father promise to send him a new story or a poem every day. Burgess kept his promise. He also kept carbons. Several of the stories seemed good enough to serve as space-fillers in the magazine, so he ran them. An editor of Little, Brown saw them and asked for others. The result was "Old Mother West Wind," first of the series that has made Burgess's name beloved by children the world over.

The daily stories in the newspapers grew out of the sale of *Good Housekeeping.* When the magazine changed hands a few months later, he fumbled around in the advertising business until he noticed that a number of newspapers were running stories for children, simply as entertainment. Why shouldn't entertainment be combined with instruction? He made a sheaf of stories, sent them to a Syndicate, and got a six-months' contract. The first story appeared in 1912, under the title, "Little Stories for Bedtime." One has appeared every week-day since, without a single break. These 9,000 stories total nearly 10,000,000 words.

Burgess starts work at 8 a.m. As soon as he finishes a story, he forgets it. Once his manuscript blew away before its ink was dry, and he had to write an entirely new one; the other was out of sight, out of mind. If a story bogs down in the works—say a story about Johnny Chuck—that night, lying in bed, he thinks of everything



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he knows about woodchucks, and next morning the story usually writes itself.

And Burgess has found out about woodchucks things most people don't know. A few years ago, he was keeping six young woodchucks in his kitchen. Woodchucks can't climb and they can't jump, yet he came home one afternoon and found one of them sitting on the windowsill, four feet from the floor. How did he get there? Burgess was bewildered. Next day, he found two of them on top of the washing-machine. This was near the window, but it offered no foothold at all. A few days later, one was discovered asleep in a basket on the top of the kitchen cabinet, which was eight feet high. The mystery was finally solved by the cook. She said they would stand on their hind legs with their backs against the wall, brace themselves against the cabinet or the washing-machine, and shrug their way up to the top.

Sometimes nothing comes to Burgess for two or three days. Sometimes he does three or four stories a day. He hung up his record in 1931, when Harrison Cady, his illustrator, told him that he would go to Europe if he could get three months ahead on his drawings. Burgess holed up and rattled off eighty-four stories in 14 days.

Surprisingly, the most difficult part of his work is the two lines of verse that head each story. This sort of thing:

> The truly great are those so smart
> They make of life a living art.

This little moral frequently takes Burgess as long as the story itself. Each story ends with an announcement of tomorrow's title. Burgess writes it with no idea of what the subject will be, and there are days when he has to struggle to make a story live up to its billing.

Burgess hopes to establish the *Burgess Story Magazine,* published desultorily at present, as a regular monthly if the public shows enough interest. "I look on it as my crowning achievement," he says. "I want to make it a power through educational entertainment in saving what remains to us of the rich inheritance of wild life which we have so recklessly wasted."

Meanwhile he and his wife live quietly at Springfield, in a house full of nature books, with a lawn full of birdhouses. Now that the 9,000th milestone is past Burgess has set his eyes on the 10,000th. He may rest then and he may not. He hasn't decided yet. Or he may continue for only ten stories more, which would give him the distinction of beating Scheherezade's endurance record exactly ten times over.

The record for instructing and inspiring children he already holds.

High-Hearted Refugee

SECOND WIND. By Carl Zuckmayer. Translated by Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1940. 289 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by HEINZ NORDEN

A CERTAIN play produced in Berlin fifteen years ago called for the crowing of a cock. The stage manager, an urban product ill-versed in barnyard sound-effects, could think of none to call on for verisimilitude but the lusty author himself. And so Carl Zuckmayer, still in a cold sweat at the funereal critics' row, stood in the wings merrily intoning "cock-a-doodle-doo"—or, rather, since this was Germany, "ki-ke-ri-ki."

"The Jolly Vineyard," which overnight established Zuckmayer as a ranking playwright, "turned out to be more than a play," writes Dorothy Thompson.

> It was an orgy. It was an orgy of sunshine, harvest, love, lewdness, tenderness, satire and gargantuan mirth . . . It was a mirth that rises from a robust affirmation of life . . . I laughed, everybody laughed, the world laughed. For the first but not the last time in my life I felt as though an outburst of German laughter might sweep the world clean. The play was coarse—coarse and clean—all the coarseness scrubbed with the soap of imagination and honesty. I was crazily happy. So was everybody else.

And now Carl Zuckmayer, a shining star in the good that has blown to America from Europe's ill wind, carries on his robust affirmation of life in a rambling book of reminiscences and forward-lookings that irrepressibly pierces the pall of gloom overhanging refugeedom.

Swept out of school into the First World War, he went through four years of purgatory as a member of a field artillery unit nicknamed the "Corpse Circus." Yet the incident that seems to have stuck deepest in his mind is the poignant love story of a German officer and a Belgian Cinderella. "Whom it does not kill, it makes strong," he quotes Nietzsche. Zuckmayer was not killed.

After the war he was hurled pell-mell into the feverish hot-house atmosphere of the young German intellectuals, at first in the provinces, then in Berlin. This was the era of frantic experimentation when no holds were barred. Great talent lived cheek-by-jowl with shallow fakery. Zuckmayer, part of this life without ever really being of it, eked out a precarious living by odd jobs, often on the fringe of the theater in which it was his burning ambition to achieve success, occasionally by more questionable means. He was no stranger to hunger and empty pocket, but more often than not there seem to have been a bottle of wine—and a girl.

By temperament if not origin, Zuckmayer was a peasant, and no sooner had the "Jolly Vineyard" brought him material success than he settled down to a gentleman-peasant's life in Henndorf near Salzburg, Austria, where he became the squire of the rambling old Meadow Mill, his home for more than twelve years, until the Nazi Anschluss drove him out.

"Home is not where a man is born but where he wants to die," writes Carl Zuckmayer. He is no man for dying, but out of his acceptance of life springs the acceptance of death, and surely Henndorf was where he wanted to lie. Yet when he had to forsake his hearth under harrowing circumstances — don't get the idea that "Second Wind" is all Carnival in Flanders; there is the constant glint of anti-Fascist steel—he resumed his life in the New World without a whimper.

> I was born (again) in June 1939. My cradle was an Atlantic steamship sailing under the Dutch flag. I uttered my first cry, it was a cry of joy, on the dock in Hoboken after the custom formalities were over. I am, for the present, a rather anemic infant—and this fact I beg you to interpret in a purely material sense—but I have an immense appetite . . . No, even if I could, I should not exchange my place in time and space . . . A man belongs to the time in which he lives. He grows into it like a plant which is intertwined with the elements . . . But happiness and suffering, tragedy and high destiny, guilt and mercy are of every time . . .

There is much else the reviewer is tempted to quote—the ringing paean to the joy of living on the last pages, for instance; but let the reader turn to the book for that. Carl Zuckmayer has come a long way since he stood crowing on the stage of the Theater am Schiffbauerdamn in 1925. America is the better for him and his, up in the old Perry farmhouse in old Vermont. "Second Wind" is something to crow about.

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And America Sleeps

YESTERDAY IS DEAD. By Stuart Cloete. New York: Smith & Durrell. 1940. 267 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE CATLIN

IT may be that the issues of peace and war are as significant as those of Buddhism. They are not unrelated. It is possible to spend twenty years on the exact study of those issues and to be informed at the end of the time, that no book can be published containing the conclusions the author reaches. "There is no market." The university presses cater to conscripted schoolboys and to the top shelves of libraries. It is no secret that Streit's "Union Now" was almost suffocated at birth. The salesmen said that there was "no market." The Russians have their remedy—a state press, and the public is given what it should have until it grows to like it. Mr. Shaw, too, told us that was the right way. In a free country, an alternative might be possible. At present there is a statistical relation in democracy between-non-knowledge and influence on opinion, guided by the sales-mechanism. One might take some group of Olympians such as the so-called Einstein School at Princeton. They could study the political problems that matter to man. Their conclusions could be popularized and publicized with acknowledgment to this new Academy and Areopagus. The press and radio might even by law be compelled to give these "hand-outs" adequate notice. No one would be compelled to agree, but every one would be forced to mark and digest. We would have compulsory education for adults in their civic responsibilities.

That calm method is not Mr. Cloete's. Mr. Cloete is a novelist, a Guard's officer of the last war, now resident in America. He writes for a public. He writes as Jehu drove, with fury and sometimes with beauty. He picks up subject after subject, states an opinion with vividness and color—and then lays it down. His mind is discontinuous—he states a contradiction, and calls it a conviction. I have been unable to extract from the book a single consistent line of ideas, except that Mr. Cloete is against reason as the centrally human factor.

"Stuart Cloete writes with fury . . . and beauty."

"There is no relationship between rationalism and life." Melodrama and revivalism are part of the life pattern. He says that novelists are political experts. "There are more brains among the columnists than in the Senate." He is, as it were, Mr. Hemingway writing philosophy on the morning after. It is in the passionate school of Jean Jacques Rousseau. Here in this book we have together fishhooks and elephants, a ragout and a zoo. Mr. Cloete is for heroic belligerency and for damning the cowardly churches. If they had courage, they might refuse to baptize the children of soldiers: thou shalt not kill. He is for Jesus Christ. He sounds a call for Aid to Britain. He is for *libido*. He is for the war for democracy. He thinks Britain should be and remain under a dictatorship. "There will be neither the time, nor the desire, for that debate which characterizes a free constitutional government." The internationalists are classed with half-baked theories. But the "appeasers" are devil-worshippers. He is kind to Marx. He is bitter about materialism. "It is a certainty the Americas will be forced into the world pattern of controlled trade.

Mr. Cloete is perverse; he is corruscating: he is glib; he is sincere; he riots in self-contradiction. To use his own phrase, "melodrama overshadows drama." He practises no contraception on his ideas. If we are to fall for this whirr of words, then it is the abandonment of reason as guide in politics. Wartime always produces this literature. Of two men of a genus I almost prefer Herr Hitler, with "Mein Kampf," to Mr. Cloete with his Blakesque defenses of democracy, and Urizen-fulminated warnings to America. Hitler and Lenin are much more reasonable—more my universe of conversation.

Mr. Cloete honestly believes that Hitler can only be met in combat by taking a hair from some nether or inferior part of the dog that bit us; by assuming the prophetic and apocalyptic style, with rolling of tom-toms; by stirring passion in the parlors and book clubs. He too, often seems symptomatic of that cult of anti-reason that, whether expressed in D. H. Lawrence, Bolshevism, or Nazism is a peculiar root curse of this age, which will know no peace until it is eradicated, both root and branch. It confounds the values we desperately need to restore. It forgets that Logos is God.

Nevertheless Hamlet's stabbing wildly at the tapestry sometimes strikes a living being, a real issue. Indeed "Yesterday Is Dead"—although, praise be, three thousand years of tradition in values since Confucius are still alive. "Radio Is King" is a chapter title. ("Radio propaganda attacks morale" say Cloete; also, "everyone is a propagandist who dares to state his opinion.") Mr. Cloete does a good work by flaying the business men for their complacency and belief that Russia and Germany will, after the war, let them go on, even in America, as before. He exposes the type of man that permits the A. F. of L. to proclaim that it will fight fascism, urge a 40-hour week, and dicker about racketeering, all at the same time. Better "imperial democracy" by regulations, says Mr. Cloete, than lose it by illtime mulish obstinacy and heavy backsided slowness, quarrels about whether to fight our own "imperialist" government first. What is happening today in Roumania may happen here. That is also true. Bubonic plague may sweep the world—or it may not. It is well to have it recorded that, in 1934, American corporations sold one and one half million dollars worth of airplane engines to Nazi Germany and advised the Nazi government which they thought best for military purposes.

The basic issues, however, which are hinted at are not answered—pacifism or peace organization by force? Marxism, Nazism or a Third Way? Is there time to organize ruthlessly a Third Way, with or without France and Britain? Reason, Will, Matter—which is prime? This last is raised, as by Lovejoy, and answered—in the name of that dynamic Will which is the core of fascist philosophy. There is much wisdom in this book—as there is in Marx. There is beauty in many passages and vividness of writing. But Mr. Cloete's vigorous attack on fascism seems to me to accept far too much of the mood and philosophic presuppositions of its opponent for my peace of mind. It will be a popular book that will attract many—but it will attract especially those who have already betrayed the citadel of reason in their minds and are, even if unconsciously, half-fascist.

George Catlin is the author of "Anglo-Saxony and Its Traditions," published by the Macmillan Co.

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—From a feature review by JOSEPH HENRY JACKSON in the San Francisco Chronicle

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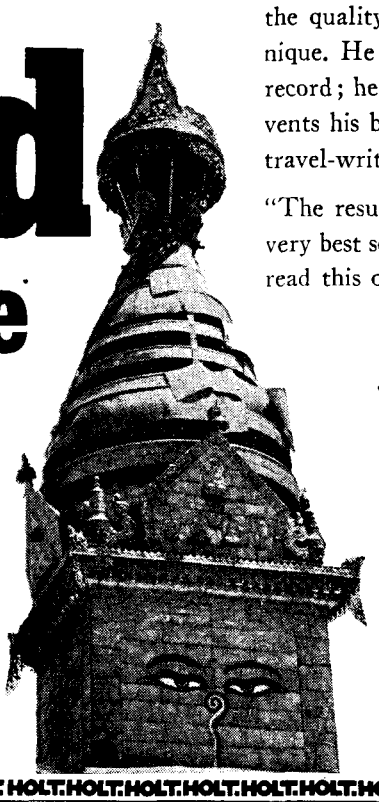
By HASSOLDT DAVIS



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NIHILISM IN BOOKS

(*Continued from page 4*)

issue with the debunkers of history who tell us that the men we were taught to revere and emulate, the men who founded our democracy, were as selfishly motivated as any financial speculator manipulating the stock market for his gain. A well-intentioned partisan of the debunkers wrote in to ask him whether he really considered that it was necessary to uphold falsehood in order to maintain in the citizens of our American democracy that respect for their historical heritage without which they would lack the incentive to defend their freedom. By way of answer, he referred to a passage in which Professor Charles A. Beard had maintained that our Constitution could be perfectly explained if we could list the material interests of the men who drew it up. Thousands of men, he pointed out, who have owned land, ships, stocks, and bonds could not conceivably have achieved what Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, Madison, and the others achieved in constructing the Constitution. Their material interests alone are not equal to the magnitude of this achievement, and Lippmann consequently expressed himself as unwilling to believe that the historian has not the duty to acknowledge the qualities of greatness requisite to the deed. He might also have pointed out that the writing of history is, after all, as much a matter of personal interpretation as the writing of novels, that a cynical interpretation reflects the philosophy of the historian, his understanding of the motives by which men act, rather than the intrinsic nature of historical material. He went on to say:

> The cynicism of Beard is incapable of constructing anything: it invites a Madison to think not of a constitution but of his stocks and bonds; therefore he will not make a constitution. And it invites the people to believe that a Madison is thinking only of his stocks and bonds; therefore, they will not trust his constitution even if it were in their interest. This is how the debunkers have contributed to that nihilism, that paralysis of the will and disintegration of values which is the disease, the well-nigh fatal disease, of our society.

No adult in his right mind would attempt to argue that men—perhaps all of them—are not often governed by petty, mean, vengeful, and selfish motives. But surely they are not altogether governed by them, and in all men there is an inner struggle between the passions that are evil and the ideals they fight to realize. Shakespeare, Dostoievsky, Melville, all the great novelists and dramatists and poets, were acutely conscious of this moral polarity in human life and drew from it the material of their greatest works. It is because Dmitri Karamazov retains his "immaculate manliness" in the midst of corruption, because Macbeth can repent terribly of the evil he has done, because Pierre Bezuhov can preserve the loftiness of his spirit despite the debauchery into which he is plunged, that these are great characters in literature. But the characters which the nihilists display to us have lost any virtue they may ever have had in corruption, know evil without repentance, and have sunk their spirits irredeemably in the mire of their environments. They are all animals, no better than rats; they have no souls. And by their standards we citizens of a democracy are taught to know ourselves.

Yet the philosophy of nihilism is no less alien to the satiric mocking spirit that produced such books as "Don Quixote" and "Candide" than it is to the spirit of heroic tragedy that has given us our most valued literature. For these satires are also affirmations of essential human nobility, they also seek to uphold human values rather than to destroy them. What they attack is not the spirit of man but the corruption of the world in which that spirit has its being, and it is precisely by contrast with the aspirations of the human soul that the corruption of the world appears evil. If Don Quixote were really a scoundrel his misadventures in a world of scoundrels would concern none of us. If Candide were not so invincibly pure of heart, the viciousness of the Panglosses and the Grand Inquisitors who surround him would be a matter of indifference to us. Candide and Don Quixote are pitiful as well as ridiculous because they can never see the universal corruption which, like an invisible enemy, defeats their aspirations at every turn. But both affirm, as does Macbeth, that man has something which he calls a soul. They incite us to overcome deceit and knavery and greed for the credit of that something. But the nihilists have taught us that all virtue is illusion, that if we want to live successfully in this world we must give up the struggle to possess our mythical souls, we must overcome our misguided aspirations and descend to the level of the beasts we really are.

Thus morally disarmed, we are now confronted with the call to arms! We

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are asked to unite, to take hands for the purpose of defending the common heritage of free men!

We have not found it too late to reverse a good many trends in recent days, and it is not too late to reverse this one. While the sun shone upon our greatness we did not recognize the inroads that the insidious bacteria of moral disintegration were making upon it, but beneath the rumbling black clouds that now spread across our democratic sky we have at last become aware of our moral nakedness. The fall of the French Republic came as an awakening shock to most of us. No different, essentially, from the fall of Germany seven years earlier, it was more clearly understood. It came at the end of a long train of similar events and, like a sleeper reluctant to be awakened by the knocking on the door, we heard at last; we heard the knocking and awakened to the realization that for seven years and more, while voices had been crying "Fire!", we had tossed and pulled the blankets about our ears and kept the darkness.

Though the nihilists, the scoffers, and debunkers, will continue to exist democratically in our midst, their philosophy should no longer be countenanced by men of good will. It should be recognized as the pernicious evil it is. The creative writers of our democracy have a new duty, which is only an old duty that many of them had forgotten: not to write propaganda for the democratic way of life, not to crusade for reform, not to advance with clashing arms upon the foe — merely to show us citizens of an embattled democracy the best in human life by contrast with the worst, the heroic as well as the abject, the noble as well as the sordid. They must give us again what will make us proud to be men, a sense of our dignity and an awareness of our responsibility. They must show us how best to live and how to die, they must inform us that we are better than the rats if related to them, they must teach us that we have souls. Let them once again convince us that we are worthy of freedom! The rest will follow.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. Della Young, in "The Gift of the Magi," by O. Henry.
2. "The Little Match Girl," by Hans Christian Andersen.
3. Ebenezer Scrooge, in "A Christmas Carol," by Dickens.
4. Dick Bullen, in "How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar," by Bret Harte.
5. Artaban, in "The Story of the Other Wise Man," by Henry Van Dyke.
6. Carol Bird, in "The Birds' Christmas Carol," by Kate Douglas Wiggin.

Virginibus Puerisque

The Saturday Review's Guide to the Season's Books for Children

Title and Author	*Age and Sex*	*What It's About*	*Our Opinion*
THE STORY OF COLETTE *Françoise* (Scribners: $1.50)	4-6 Girls	A reading-aloud story of the animals adopted by a little French girl; the colors used in the pictures are delightful enough in themselves to recommend the book.	Gay and artistic
ROWENA, THE SKATING COW *Stewart Schackne and Fritz Eichenberg* (Scribners: $1.50)	4-6 Either	Success-story of a cow who learned to skate and became an international star, but who found life on the home farm happier than a glittering career.	Pleasant
MY FIRST HORSE *Will James* (Scribners: $1.50)	6-8 Either	A four-year-old cowboy and his adventures with a wooden horse. Colored pictures by the author; disingenuous, first-person text.	Nice; for urban tomboys
TUMBLE BEAR *Margot Austin* (Scribners: $1.50)	4-6 Either	A small bear visits the beach and explores crabs, sea-shells, and a pair of pink water wings. The tone is too strenuously childish; but the illustrations are nice.	Good as a picture-book
A BOOK FOR JENNIFER *Alice Dalgliesh* *Ill. by Katherine Milhous* (Scribners: $2.)	6-10	The Bannister children of eighteenth-century London meet John Newbery, the first publisher of children's books. With old rhymes and woodcuts from old books, this is an excellent excursion into background and atmosphere.	Charming and original

LETTERS OF JOSEPH CONRAD
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CHRISTOPHER MORLEY in the *Book-of-the-Month Club News* says that "it illustrates an extraordinarily interesting episode in the life of this great and always perplexed writer. Every quality for which one justly esteems Conrad is evident in these letters; his complete disregard of accuracy in dates, his very faulty French, his phosphor-flashes of clownish humor, and his hypostatic romanticism . . . for Conrad specialists . . . a luxury, indeed." This is the first edition in any language of the letters from Conrad to Marguerite Poradowska. Illustrated. $2.75

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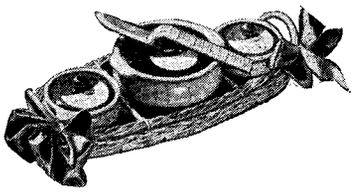

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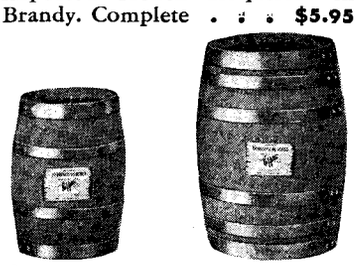

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Destination Undetermined

TO NOWHERE AND RETURN: The Autobiography of a Puritan. By Joseph Hilton Smyth. New York: Carrick & Evans. 1940. 311 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by LINTON WELLS

"WHERE was I going, and why?" Joseph Hilton Smyth, aged twenty-two, asked himself one hot morning at Puerto Barrios, Guatemala. "The answer, evidently, was nowhere. Nowhere . . . for good reason."

Although this prolific American writer and *ci-devant* editor and publisher has traveled widely and fast since, he really has been "To Nowhere and Return," as the title of this rather self-pitying "Autobiography of a Puritan" clearly indicates.

The first thirty-five years "ended in a sordid rooming house on lower Jane Street—a four-dollar-a-week bedroom reeking with the flat odor of stale whiskey and sour wine." As Smyth fights to regain lost health, the years to come are still in doubt.

If confession is good for the soul, then Hilton Smyth's soul must be in pretty good shape at this point, because in "To Nowhere and Return" he has skipped few details. His 37 years of life began amid the solid conventionality of New England and he strives to justify an intemperance in all things on the ground that his Down East childhood was made abnormal by a mother who resented him and held over his head the threat that he "would be a drunkard" like the father he never knew.

Hilton Smyth's adventuring abroad began when he became of age and sailed to the Caribbean in the *Gaspe* to hunt whales and film *Down to the Sea in Ships.* Then he went to Central America to become a soldier of misfortune (or, as he says, tropical tramp). At twenty-three he was in New Orleans with a few bullet scars and a permanent limp acquired in a Guatemala insurrection.

The author deprecates an acknowledged literary ability by saying that he has "no talent, except for indirection." Well, that indirection took him back and forth to Europe during the middle and late twenties. In France, he fraternized with Frank Harris and that gang of two-fisted drinking expatriates who came to woo the muse and became disciples of Bacchus at Harry's New York Bar. He wrote what passed for poetry, worked for the Chicago *Tribune,* gambled and caroused, dabbled in amorous experimentation, and was reduced to sleeping under the Pont Neuf, always seeing life through an alcoholic miasma.

Back in America, still promising himself to write the great American novel, he turned to hackwriting, throwing money away as quickly as he made it; forming mesalliances; seeking to escape from himself through alcohol and acquiring instead a procession of hangovers and a perpetual case of jitters; taking cures and backsliding; living about from Greenwich Village to the East Fifties to Bowery flop houses; taking a seemingly sadistic delight in giving his puritanical conscience full play in cynical appraisals of women.

On his thirty-fifth birthday, in January, 1937, he began to pull himself together again and took another cure. Before long, his innate ability made him editor and publisher of *The Living Age,* co-publisher and foreign editor of *Current History,* editor and publisher of *North American Review,* co-publisher of *The Saturday Review of Literature,* partner in a book publishing house and a couple of detective magazines. Simultaneously, he was writing tens of thousands of words monthly for the pulps, and, as usual, was involved in domestic and financial chaos.

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THE NEW BOOKS

Fiction

KATE TRIMINGHAM. By Frances Frost. Farrar & Rinehart. 1940. 240 *pp.* $2.50.

Because Frances Frost is a poet and not merely "poetic" she has mastered a diction as serviceable in prose as in verse, precise, subtle, and plain, reflecting as it should the self-same qualities of mind. "Kate Trimingham" is the narrative of one week's events in a small New England town. In particular it tells the story of a half-dozen residents: Kate, the music-teacher, seventy-three, impoverished, a spinster; her lifelong friend Sara Drew, a great-grandmother, and as much of a hellion, with as good a figure as when she was a girl; thirteen-year-old Gaddy, whose parents are always fighting; and the young Tim Dugans who are expecting their first baby. The tale begins on Monday. By Sunday night Sara has moved to her own house, away from her insufferable son and daughter-in-law; the Dugan's baby has been born; disaster has freed Gaddy from ever again having to watch her father kick her mother in the stomach; and Kate Trimingham's heart has stopped beating.

Miss Frost has told her story so quietly, with such economy of statement, that the reader might almost fail to recognize what he is reading about. Actually, he is reading about the same things that have prompted many writers to violent and bitter diatribes against New England life. Everything is here, ignorance, viciousness, social and sexual hypocrisy, a child driven to suicide, a proud and innocent woman persecuted to her death by vile gossip and mass cruelty. Miss Frost has dimmed none of the horror of these things, but she has treated her entire scene as an adult and not as a hysterical adolescent first confronted by human ugliness. She has neither whitewashed nor satirized. F. S.

OLIVES ON THE APPLE TREE. By Guido D'Agostino. Doubleday, Doran. 1940. 302 *pp.* $2.50.

Today when the definition of Americanism is taking a beating from friends and enemies alike, it is heartening to get a fresh, vigorous, thoroughly sincere statement of it. Best of all, it issues from a writer who speaks for, and to, one of the peoples who sent great waves of emigrants to this country. We have seen a number of young Italian writers make recent appearance, but none of them is as sound of purpose and as well worth watch- as Guido D'Agostino. He does not share their chief weakness: a romantic subjectivity. They celebrate themselves. D'Agostino looks upon his people, those who have come to America, with a mature subjectivity, with a loving discernment and a critical detachment that exist side by side. Every type of Italian-American is here, the hot-blooded peasant who clings to the soil and the ambitious young doctor who hates his hyphenated origins, the proud migrant worker who feels that to be an Italian, and to work and produce in America, is to be American, and the laborer who has amassed wealth as he has lost contact with his people. It is not a tract D'Agostino has written. It is an exciting, eloquent novel, fertile in detail and in tightly woven circumstance. The conflicts of purpose rise naturally out of a story that binds all of these people together, as they strive in their several ways to find their places in a second homeland. It seems necessary to add, because it is not always true in novels of this kind, that the dialect English, varying as it does from one type to another, is perfectly set down, with no perceptible false note of whimsy or exaggeration. As a first novel this is unquestionably a success.

N. L. R.

MIGHTY MOUNTAIN. By Archie Binns. Scribners. 1940. 440 *pp.* $2.75.

There is a distant, legendary quality about this novel which shrouds it in mist, very much as Mount Rainier, the mighty mountain itself, is shrouded. Mr. Binns writes of the Washington territory and of its wresting from the Indians in the 1850's, with a bardic imagery that has always about it the striking of the harp. Some of the images thus evoked are magnificent, particularly that of Neschi, the great Indian leader, whose courage and integrity do not equip him for his contest with the rapacious and unprincipled white squatters. Neschi's tragic martyrdom is all but sung, as are the earth and the waters for which he fought, the virgin beauties of the Pacific northwest. Yet this same bardic writing blurs some parts of the pic-

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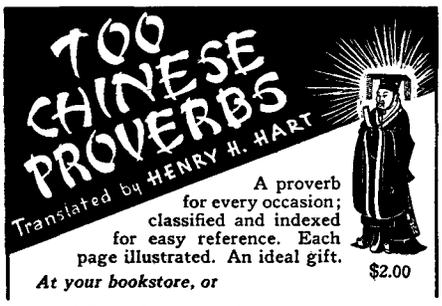
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ture that should have been icy-clear. Elmer Hale, whose history we trace from the Massachusetts sea-port which is his home, across the continent to the Western territory, is no hero but a man, a Yankee frontiersman seeking new stakes. The broad, heroic line which gives us Neschi fails completely to do the same for Elmer; both he and Lisette, his wife and partner in difficulties, lack the sharpness of outline and earthy detail which they need. Mr. Binns has given us not a historical novel but a sort of heroic mural, broad, suggestive, emotional, with shadowy figures against a dominant landscape.

N. L. R.

HILLBILLY DOCTOR. By Elizabeth Seifert. Dodd, Mead. 1940. 260 *pp.* $2.50.

The always interesting details of the attempts of doctors and nurses to conquer ill health and disease against the obstacles of ignorance and stubborn pride provide what punch there is in an otherwise routine novel about a jobless young doctor who becomes the unwelcome physician to a backwoods Ozark community. The medical story, particularly the incidents about a smallpox epidemic, might have made exciting reading, if the characters had any life. They are, unfortunately, the characters usually found in "romances"—paper dolls in nice costumes with nothing underneath. Miss Seifert won a $10,000 prize for her first doctor novel, "Young Doctor Galahad;" and she has published several medical stories since. Probably "Hillbilly Doctor" will be satisfactory to her readers; it won't do much to enlarge her audience. From the ending one suspects that it is intended as the first story of a series.

E. A.

SUCH IS THE KINGDOM. By Thomas Sugrue. Holt. 1940. 375 *pp.* $2.50.

Mr. Sugrue's book is a kind of novelized diary of a Connecticut town near New Haven. The year is 1909. The people whose lives are recorded in that long-ago Summer, Autumn, Equinox, Spring (the author's divisions), are the "high" Irish of Kelly Hill: "That's why we live on the hill and walk a half mile to the shop so the children can grow up decently, with some fresh air and no coalyards and railroad tracks." Their names read like a roster of the Irish immigration, McCluskeys, O'Mahaneys, Dugans, Sheehans, Doyles. They are bartenders, priests, contractors, fine young wives, and aging sour wives.

The brawling drinkers in Blackie O'Flaherty's saloon and the frightened little boys at first communion come alive on these pages, real as a glass of beer, or the screen of the confessional. Thomas Sugrue has both knowledge and humanity. And yet his book lacks the intensity, the drive, the emotional impact of the true novel. His narrative is too casual as if he himself realized the distance of 1909 America from the turbulence of 1940. He does not show his "high" Irish in change. He merely presents the facts of change like a diarist. There are no Studs Lonnigans, no Stephen Dedaluses in this book.

B. A.

LET THE EARTH SPEAK. By Ann Steward. Macmillan. 1940. 470 *pp.* $2.50.

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sion, Ann Steward's novel manages to reach the reader against terrific odds. The theme is simple enough and has always been sound. It is the legend of Antaeus: strength and healing drawn from renewed contact with the earth. In "Let the Earth Speak" four shattered and self-bound people enter a Kentucky farm to spend a year there. One goes gladly, to carry out the terms of a mystical pact drafted twenty years before. The others are skeptical or grudging. At the year's end all have won through to some measure of freedom and a perception of the individual's oneness with the universe. This change is accomplished partly by the cycle of the seasons, bringing life and death to plant and animal life, but mostly by the spiritual power of half-a-dozen neighbors. These six are linked by a close kinship with the forces of nature, all have passed through some searing purification, and their inner strength and simplicity illuminate the lives of the strangers.

Mrs. Steward's vision of these godlike creatures is passionate and persuasive. And the key of half-fanatic ecstasy in which the entire book is pitched is compelling even though it is exhausting. Not many readers, however, will have the patience to discover these virtues. Worshiping simplicity of soul, Mrs. Steward has utterly forsaken simplicity of speech. Hers is not a crude, inexpert style. It is a viciously bad one, deliberately and laboriously acquired. If the book were wholly without merit or the author without sincerity, this would hardly matter. But because under all that prose there is something alive, and because Mrs. Steward is desperately sincere it is a pity that she has worked so hard to learn so much that has to be unlearned.

F. S.

Miscellaneous

MODERN WILDERNESS. By William Arthur Babson. Doubleday, Doran. 1940. 261 *pp.* $3.

Most persons who live in large cities think of the wilderness as something you have to travel to the Canadian Northwest or the Amazon to find. Mr. Babson, a New York lawyer in his everyday life, an explorer on holidays and week-ends, is one of the elite who know that the towers of Manhattan themselves look down on the haunts of wild geese and ducks, of hawks and eagles and owls. His particular field of exploration is a triangular area of swampy wilderness in Morris County, New Jersey, bounded by the Passaic and Whippany Rivers on two sides, by U. S. highway No. 10 on the third.

This book is an informal collection of chapters relating Mr. Babson's adventures in this wilderness. They tell of his searches through swamps and woodlands for the nests of owls and hawks, of his discovery of a wood duck's nest and his subsequent experiment in hatching the eggs under a barnyard hen, of rearing a pair of great horned owls only to set them free when they were able to care for themselves, of photographing a killdeer on its eggs. The author, though he has not the literary gift of making plain facts glow with the significance of his own emotion, is still a reflective writer. His world, while near at hand, is far from the tumult of civilized catastrophes. Something of the timeless peace and serenity which he has found in it comes to the reader through the pages of his book.

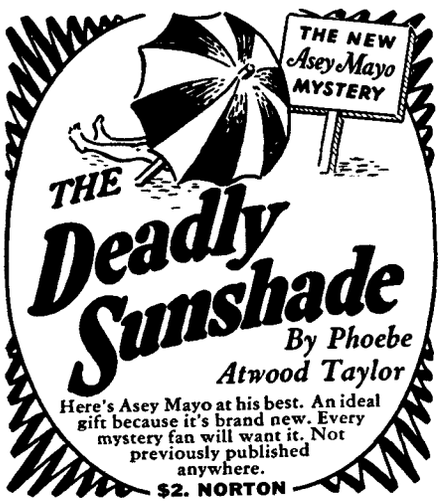
L. J. H., Jr.

War

WAR WITHOUT MUSIC. By Peter Muir. Scribner's. 1940. 262 *pp.* $2.

War correspondents observe a battle as onlookers, but men like Peter Muir view it as participants. Mr. Muir had his taste of the Britzkrieg while serving as section leader of the American Field Service, whose volunteers drove ambulances through bombing, artillery fire, retreat, and unutterable confusion to save human lives. His unit was among the last to leave Amiens and Beauvais when these cities were being pounded to a shambles by the German air force and approached by the Nazi mechanized formations. He led his cars along roads jammed with demoralized refugees in the great flight to the south and saw the French army and civil administration break up under the assault of the enemy. In the end, he was captured by the advancing motorized units, managed a thrilling escape and a trip to Paris, and accompanied most of his comrades back to the United States via the Spanish frontier. Mr. Muir's description of his experiences is graphic as war itself is graphic. Those who read his book will share his emotions: admiration for Nazi technical efficiency, mingled with hatred of Nazi methods and objectives, and a resolve to bend every effort toward destruction of the evil force behind the German conquest.

D. H. P.



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HOMICIDE JOHNNY *Stephen Gould* (Mystery House: $2.)	Murder of Mamaroneck newspaper owner and nefarious designs on young doctor's reputation give young sleuth plenty to do.	Central detective character and local girl-librarian are attractive but plot creaks considerably and much of writing is pretty juvenile.	Ordinary

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Double-Crostics: No. 351

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	1-E	2-I	3-J	■	4-B	5-L
6-J	7-Q	■	8-Y	9-C	10-Z	11-N	12-V	13-P	14-W	15-L	16-M	17-U	18-X	■	■	19-V	20-Z	21-K
22-P	23-I	24-A	■	25-N	26-P	■	27-Y	28-X	29-F	30-T	31-G	32-R	33-V	■	■	34-A	35-M	36-Q
■	37-T	38-B	39-G	40-C	41-Y	42-R	43-Z	44-M	■	45-F	46-X	47-K	■	48-T	49-D	50-K	51-R	
■	52-L	53-Y	54-N	55-M	56-J	57-W	58-E	59-D	■	60-Y	61-J	62-U	63-W	64-O	65-P	■	66-I	
67-N	■	68-S	69-W	70-F	71-B	■	72-S	73-M	74-Y	75-O	76-H	77-T	78-Z	79-R	■	80-W	81-K	
■	82-Q	83-G	■	84-P	85-O	86-C	87-M	88-U	89-H	90-K	■	91-E	92-Q	■	93-B	94-C	95-Z	
96-M	■	97-J	98-B	■	99-L	100-D	101-R	102-I	103-J	104-U	105-F	106-O	■	107-F	108-C	■	109-K	
■	110-Z	111-S	112-Y	113-M	114-K	115-D	■	116-N	117-A	118-L	■	119-S	120-J	121-B	122-C	123-A	■	
124-H	125-P	126-M	127-V	128-R	129-N	130-X	131-U	132-A	133-C	134-J	■	135-T	136-C	137-A	138-O	139-W	■	
140-X	141-U	142-V	143-Q	144-Z	145-P	146-M	147-I	148-N	149-H	150-F	■	151-H	152-D	153-K	154-W	155-F	■	
156-J	157-P	158-X	159-S	160-U	161-Y	162-V	163-G	■	164-P	165-J	166-M	167-T	168-W	169-Q	■	170-K	171-Q	
172-E	173-X	174-L	175-A	176-H	■	177-E	178-B	179-A	■	180-X	181-Z	182-I	183-N	184-A	185-D	■	■	

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 18 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Behead.

B. Beverage of wine and honey (Gr.)

C. Romeo's first love.

D. Pseudonym of W. S. Porter.

E. Man of brass made by Hephaestus.

F. Exhalation.

G. Monetary unit of Chinese Republic.

H. Cudgel.

I. Ragout of lamb with vegetables.

J. Power to give satisfaction (Econ.)

K. Large letter, capital, uncial.

L. Sudden overpowering fright.

M. Swedish novelist and dramatist (1849-1912).

N. Cleanse.

O. River in W. Africa.

P. Progeny.

Q. Render agreeable.

R. Greek avenging spirit.

S. Grow gradually less.

T. Imitation pearl.

U. French novelist and critic (1866-).

V. Occurrences.

W. Remote, hidden.

X. Austrian composer (1797-1828).

Y. Favorable opportunity.

Z. Absurdity.

WORDS

179	24	175	117	137	132	34	184	123	
4	121	178	98	93	38	71			
40	9	122	136	133	94	108	86		
100	115	59	49	152	185				
1	177	58	91	172					
155	70	29	107	45	105	150			
163	31	39	83						
151	76	89	124	149	166	176			
2	182	118	147	23	66	102			
165	61	120	3	6	56	156	103	97	134
90	109	170	153	81	114	21	50	47	
52	15	5	174	99					
55	146	73	126	35	96	16	87	113	44
148	67	116	54	11	25	183	129		
64	138	75	106	85					
157	84	26	164	145	22	13	125	65	
36	171	169	143	82	92	7			
128	32	42	101	51	79				
119	159	72	111	68					
48	37	167	135	77	30				
62	141	17	160	131	104	88			
12	127	33	142	162	19				
168	57	139	80	154	63	14	69		
130	140	46	28	180	18	158	173		
74	27	8	112	60	161	53	41		
10	20	43	78	181	95	110	144		

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TRADE WINDS

P. E. G. QUERCUS ASSOCIATES

SUZY Q. answered one of the *SRL's* Personals recently, and purchased a bag of stone ground, water-wheel corn meal from The Vermont Guild of Old Time Crafts and Industries, Weston, Vermont. She reports the corn meal muffins, spoon bread, and raised corn meal griddle cakes as like nothing the deadened palate of city man has known. She was also taken by the advertising restraint which the Guild exhibited at the end of a booklet that came with the meal. This is the paragraph:—

> The life-giving embryo of the kernel is rich in Vitamins, especially B-1; called *Thiamin.* You couldn't live long without *Thiamin.* This anti-neurotic Vitamin gives you a rousing appetite, new energy, sparks up the digestive organs, protects against fatigue and nervous strain. Another valuable tonic food is the new Vitamin E . . . the anti-sterility Vitamin. Last year some friends purchased a bag of our stone ground corn meal. Just recently we received a tiny announcement in the mail announcing the joyous news. Twins! Of course we can't guarantee this every time.

★ ★

☞Swing swiftly into your Christmas book purchases for the days to Christmas are short and the nights are long after the 26th of December. This year, American books will bring hope and cheer and joy to Englishmen and Englishwomen; to refugees scattered throughout the remaining civilized divisions of the world; to the several-odd thousands of Americans still in Japan; to the 140,000,000 Americans in the United States. American book publishing is, we feel, a first line of democratic defense. Flag-waving? To be sure, it is, but look what you can give this year in 1940.

★ ★

☞May we suggest (many of these titles were recommended by *The Saturday Review* editors and reviewers last week) the following candidates for your Christmas book list:

To every man and woman: *For Whom the Bell Tolls;* the absorbing play *There Shall be No Night,* by Robert E. Sherwood; *Europe in the Spring;* Laski's *Where do We go From Here?* ☞To those who have sparingly read the works of foreign authors: *The Tide of Fortune,* by Stefan Zweig; *Yesterday is Dead,* by Stuart Cloete; *I Must Have Liberty,* by Isabel de Palencia; *The Beloved Returns,* by Thomas Mann; *Madame Dorthea,* by Sigrid Undset; *Embezzled Heaven,* by Franz Werfel; *Tragedy in France,* by André Maurois. ☞For those who like distinguished entertainment through superb fiction: *Short Stories From the New Yorker; Oliver Wiswell,* by Kenneth Roberts; *Sapphira and the Slave Girl,* by Willa Cather; *The Voyage,* by Charles Morgan; *You Can't Go Home Again,* by Thomas Wolfe; and, by golly, we're still strong for *The Grapes of Wrath,* and *Native Son.* ☞For those who like to probe into the lives of others: *Trelawny,* by Margaret Armstrong; the one-volume edition of *The Life of Sir William Osler,* by Harvey Cushing; *Pilgrim's Way,* by John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir); *Abraham Lincoln—The War Years,* by Carl Sandburg. ☞To music lovers there are two books we heartily recommend: *The Books of American Negro Spirituals,* by James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson, and *What to Listen For in Music,* by Aaron Copland. ☞To our way of thinking, the surprise book of the year is *Mark Twain in Eruption,* edited and with an introduction by Bernard DeVoto. Lovable Twain swings from the floor.

★ ★

☞All the foregoing supplements our previous gift suggestions. We're through now until next year, but the following few lines by Joseph Jack Keith add a thought or two:

Open Christmas Poem for Whimsical Book Givers

Because I'm rather
bookish, pray
give me Steinbeck
and Benét.

Give me Robert
Nathan's slim
new volume, people.
Crush your whim,

suppress your newest
urge to buy
something dear that's
made you cry.

When I wake on
Christmas early,
give me Wolfe and
give me Morley.

I don't care for
the jackets looks.
Please don't give just
anyone's books.

★ ★

☞Simon and Schuster are peddling records. Hendrik Willem Van Loon's forthcoming biography of Johann Sebastian Bach will include as a new packaging unit four of Bach recordings, arranged and played by Grace Castagnetta. An enterprise of this sort presents amusing possibilities. Now take some of the smash plays on Broadway that are being published in book form. Wouldn't it be nice to buy a copy of *The Man Who Came For Dinner* and for an extra dollar or so get two tickets for the play? Or have some of these published plays appeared in "pop-up" illustrated form?

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